

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS, IT

SUBJECT: VATICAN CONCERN FOR VIET-NAM

FOR LODGE

REF: ROME 3852

1. WITH REFERENCE TO THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION Y
MIGHT POINT OUT TO CASAROLI THAT SITUATION STILL FLUID WITH
MAJOR BATTLES YET TO COME. ARVN HAS CONSIDERABLE
REMAINING FORCE. MAJOR PARTS OF THE CENTRAL COAST
ARE DEFENSIBLE AND THE THREATS IN MOST AREAS OF
MR'S THREE AND FOUR APPEAR TO BE CONTROLLABLE.
AS YOU HAVE NOTED, LOSS OF THE HIGH PLATEAU AND EVEN,
IF IT SHOULD OCCUR, PARTS OF THE NORTHERN COAST WOULD NOT
NECESSARILY BE FATAL.

2. AS YOU HAVE STATED TO CASAROLI THE USG REMAINS
CONVINCED THAT INSTABILITY AND WAR, NOT PEACE, ARE
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PROMOTED BY SUBMITTING TO OR IGNORING AGGRESSION AGAINST

SMALL COUNTRIES. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT ATTACKS AGAINST VIET-NAM HAVE REPERCUSSIONS FAR BEYOND INDOCHINA.

GIVING UP ON VIET-NAM COULD ONLY BE AN INVITATION TO ADVANCEMENT OF POLITICAL GOALS BY FORCE IN OTHER AREAS OF TENSION.

3. THE USG HAS NO OBJECTION TO PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT DOES BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IMPORTANT INTERESTS OF MANY COUNTRIES ARE INVOLVED IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STABILITY AND PREVENTION OF FORCIBLE OVERTHROW OF EXISTING SOCIETIES BY EXTERNAL FORCES. WE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE A SITUATION WHICH MIGHT EXACERBATE GREAT POWER TENSIONS IN THE AREA.

4. THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUPPORT SOUTH VIET-NAM WITHIN LEGAL LIMITS. OPPOSITION IN CONGRESS IS INDEED FORMIDABLE BUT WE HOPE THAT HANOI'S BLATANT AND MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT WILL OCCASION SOME RETHINKING OF PUBLIC OPINION AND ATTITUDES ON THE HILL. KISSINGER

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